lndo-British study on Leprosy

23. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a recent lndo-British study found that susceptibility to leprosy could be genetically linked with individuals and families being prone to the disease;

(b) whether it does not affect Government's effort to remove the serious social stigma associated with this disease; and

(c) if so, what steps his Ministry has proposed to take to meet the situation?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR): (a) In a study report published in a UK base Journal Nature (Genetics) Vol. 27, 2001 page 439-441 it has been indicated that a genetic linkage has been observed on 10P 13 of the human genome on 224 families from Vizag Andhra Pradesh and Kumbhakonam in Tamil Nadu containing 245 independent affected sibpairs with Paucibacillary type of leprosy. It is already known that there is greater risk of contracting the infection amongst people in close contact. This result of the study does not differentiate whether it is due to close contact or by genetic susceptibility.

(b) No Sir. The National Leprosy Elimination Programme is covering all districts of the country for providing free MDT services. Potent MDT regimen reduces the load of infection remarkably in the patients soon after treatment. It is indicated by WHO that single dose of Rifampicin alone kills 99.9% of the bacilli.

(c) Does not arise.